

**Doing Business
With
Lancaster County & The City of Lincoln
(Effective November, 2001)**

Forward

This Guide is not an all-encompassing manual of purchasing policies and procedures. Those are contained within the City's Charter and Municipal Code, Mayor's Executive Orders, and the County Purchasing Act for County acquisitions. By reading this "Quick Guide" you can learn more about how you fit into the County/City purchasing process. If at any time you're unsure of the procedures described or we haven't made ourselves clear, please contact the Purchasing Division of the City Finance Department.

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Select: Government-Departments-Purchasing

Purchasing Policies

The Purchasing Division is responsible for administering purchasing policies, programs, and procedures for the acquisition of materials, equipment, supplies, services and construction projects for County/City government. The following policies have been established as guidelines for these services:

1. All request for prices or services and all purchases should be made via the Purchasing Division. This authority may be delegated to others if certain criteria exists in accordance with the City of Lincoln's Code, or the County Purchasing Act.
2. The Purchasing Division has the authority to investigate the quality, quantity, and type of materials purchased in order to best serve the interests of the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the taxpaying citizens.
3. The Purchasing Division shall not knowingly issue a purchase order or contract where there is evidence of a conflict of interest.
4. Acceptance of gifts, other than advertising novelties, is prohibited. No City or County employee shall receive a benefit or profit from any purchase or contract made in conjunction with their position as a City or County employee.
5. The County/City shall purchase from suppliers who have adequate financial strength, high ethical standards and a record of adhering to specifications and providing the full measure of services requested.

Where to Call

Purchasing is located in the "K" Street Complex, 440 South 8th Street, Suite 200, Southwest Wing, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508. Telephone number (402) 441-7410 and FAX 441-6513. You may obtain specifications for bids, quotes and requests for proposals through our office or on our web site for projects advertised by the County/City. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. Vendors are welcome to visit our office to discuss their services and product lines. We may, on occasion, direct you to other County/City departments which may be interested in your products or services. Please call and set up an appointment to insure time is available to discuss your business.

Obtaining Specifications

The Purchasing Division is moving from a paper procurement transaction environment to one that is more Internet-based. We no longer require prospective bidders to register with our division to receive bids, quotes or RFP's. Specifications and/or Notice to Bidders (bid announcements) are available for downloading off our Internet site:

Select: Bidding Opportunities

Any interested bidder can download the specifications or Notice to Bidders. You may also use the internet as a tool to look up the project, then request a paper copy of the specification by contacting the Purchasing Division.

The City of Lincoln-Lancaster County Purchasing Division provides equal opportunity for all bidders and encourages minority businesses and women's business enterprises to participate in our bidding process.

Once you respond to bids and quotes for the City and County, your name may be recorded on a list with the file for use in future projects of the same nature or for similar products.

Equal Opportunity

Each prospective bidder must agree that they will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, age, ancestry, or marital status. In the employment of persons, the bidder shall take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, age, ancestry, or marital status.

How the County and City Buys

City Departments may make purchases via their own staff for supplies or services which total an amount less than \$1,500.00.

County Agencies/ Dept. may make purchases via their own staff for supplies or services which total an amount less than \$1,000.00.

When the Department/Agency makes the purchase, they should obtain and record at least three (3) quotations, either written or verbal. Usually no purchase order is generated. Under no circumstances shall orders by Departments/Agencies be split into smaller order to avoid a quote or bid by the Purchasing Division.

Purchasing will obtain the price quotes for equipment, supply items or services with a single purchase value above the departmental limit, but less than \$10,000. It is the policy of the Purchasing Division to solicit written quotes (either via the U.S. mail or fax). However; on occasion, when an emergency exists verbal, quotes may be requested.

Both County & City Departments and Agencies must adhere to the "Formal Sealed Bid" procedure when making a purchase or contract for \$10,000.00 or more. This procedure includes public notice in the local paper, requesting bid from qualified suppliers, and distribution plans to builders bureaus for construction projects.

Taxes and Tax Exemption Certificate

The County/City is generally exempt from any taxes imposed by the State or Federal Government. A Tax Exemption Certificate will be provided upon your request

Specification Documents

Specification documents for all current bids, quotes, and request for proposals, are available in the Purchasing Office or downloaded off of our web site. Any interested vendor may request a copy by mail, telephone, or in person.

We make every effort to prepare detailed specifications which accurately define the products or services to be purchased. In some cases a brand name may be used to describe a particular product. When a brand name is used, it is for the purpose of establishing a grade or quality level of material. It is not our desire to prevent competition. Alternates may be offered and will be considered if the County/City determines them to be of equal value to the specified brand. It is the Bidder's responsibility when offering an alternate to provide supporting documentation and/or product literature outlining the features and benefits of the product offered. Please be advised that any alteration or deviation from the specification may be grounds to disqualify your offer.

Samples and Literature

Bidder should examine the specification documents carefully to ascertain if they are required to submit samples or descriptive literature with their offer. When samples or descriptive literature are required, it is understood, unless otherwise indicated in the specification, that they are offered without cost or obligation to the County/City. Samples will be held for evaluation until analysis and award recommendation is complete, after which time they may be picked up by the Bidder.

Product Evaluation

If a product is supplied for evaluation and determined to be unsatisfactory by the County/City, we reserve the right to exclude it from consideration. Any test results, evaluation charts or written evaluation generated will be available to the vendor submitting the sample. If the product or a portion of the product is consumed during the evaluation, it is understood that the County/City is under no liability or obligation to purchase all or a portion of the product.

Submitting Your Offer

Request for Quote (RFQ) is an informal process which does not have a public opening. An RFQ may be submitted via the mail or delivery service, by FAX or delivered in person to the Purchasing Office. Late quotes will not be considered. Quotes may be requested directly from City/County departments or agencies, if the purchase is within their purchasing authority.

Request for Bid (RFB) is a firm fixed price for the products or services described. We also refer to them as "formal bids". An RFB must be submitted in a sealed envelope and marked clearly with the specification number and bid opening date/time (as specified in the bidding documents). Bids may be delivered personally, by delivery service or by mail. Bidders should take caution if delivery service or U.S. Mail is used for the submission of a bid. Mailing should be made in sufficient time for the response to arrive in the Purchasing Office, prior to the time and date specified for bid opening. Late sealed bid will not be considered.

All formal bids are received in the Purchasing Office, opened publicly and read aloud at the advertised time, date and place. Bids will be awarded to the lowest responsible, responsive bidder meeting the specification requirements.

Request for Proposal (RFP) process is designed to be a competitive negotiation platform for professional services. The County/City has the flexibility to negotiate with a select firm or selected firms to arrive at a mutually agreeable relationship.

Delivery

Each bidder shall state on his/her offer the date upon which delivery of all supplies, equipment and/or services can be made. Time required for delivery may be made an essential element of the offer. The County/City reserves the right to cancel orders, or any part thereof, without obligation, if delivery is not made within the time(s) specified on the offer form. All offers shall be based upon delivery Freight On Board (FOB) to the County/City at the location specified with all transportation charges paid.

Award to the Successful Firm

The signed price schedule shall be considered an offer on the part of the vendor. Such offer shall be deemed accepted upon issuance by the County/City of purchase orders, contract award notifications, or other contract documents appropriate to the work. The County/City reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers; request rebids; to award item-by-item, by groups, or "lump sum"; to waive irregularities and technicalities; as shall best serve the requirements and interests of the County/City.

Thank you for your interest in doing business with County/City Government.